least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

19. (Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction;

a mass body arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft; and

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft;

wherein the mass body at least partially forms, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

20. (Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction;

a mass body arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft; and

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft;

wherein the propeller shaft at least partially forms, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 9 to 20 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all

of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection of Claims 18, 19 and 20 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 18, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by French Published Patent Application No. 2,720,132 ("Michel"). Applicants respectfully submit that Michel does not anticipate the present claims as amended herein for the following reasons.

Regarding claim 18 and 20, the Examiner states that "[Michel] shows in figure 5 a vibration damper capable of being used for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising: a propeller shaft 10 defining a radial and circumferential direction, a mass body 20 arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft, a plurality of rubber spring elements 3 for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft, wherein at least one of the mass body and the propeller shaft at least partially form, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements 111 for limiting a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction."

Regarding claim 19, the Examiner states that "[Michel] shows in figure 7 a vibration damper comprising: a propeller shaft 110 defining a radial and a circumferential direction, a mass body 120 arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft, and a plurality of rubber spring elements 3 for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft, wherein the mass body at least partially forms, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements a plurality of stop elements 22 capable of limiting a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction as shown in the figure." Applicants respectfully maintain that claims 18, 19 and 20 are not anticipated by Michel and request that the § 102(b) rejections be withdrawn.

Claim 18 relates to a vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle including a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction. A mass body is arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft. A plurality of rubber spring elements mount the mass body to the propeller shaft. At least one of the mass body and the propeller shaft at least partially form, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the

plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

Claim 19 relates to a vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle. The vibration damper comprises a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction. A mass body is arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft. A plurality of rubber spring elements mount the mass body to the propeller shaft. The mass body at least partially forms, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

Claim 20 relates to a vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle. The vibration damper comprises a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction. A mass body is arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft. A plurality of rubber spring elements mount the mass body to the propeller shaft. The propeller shaft at least partially forms, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

To anticipate a claim, each and every element as set forth in the claim must be found in a single prior art reference. Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of Calif., 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 U.S.P.Q.2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Furthermore, "[t]he identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the . . . claim." Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 U.S.P.Q.2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). That is, the prior art must describe the elements arranged as required by the claims. In re Bond, 910 F.2d 831, 15 U.S.P.Q.2d 1566 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Additionally, to reject a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), the Examiner must demonstrate that each and every claim limitation is contained in a single prior art reference. See, Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation v. Genentech, Inc., 18 U.S.P.Q.2d 1001, 1010 (Fed. Cir. 1991). Still further, not only must each of the claim limitations be identically disclosed, an anticipatory reference must also

enable a person having ordinary skill in the art to practice the claimed invention, namely the inventions of the rejected claim, as discussed above. See, Akzo, N.V. v. U.S.I.T.C., 1 U.S.P.Q.2d 1241, 1245 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

As described above, Applicants respectfully maintain that Michel does not anticipate claims 18, 19 and 20 for at least the reason that Michel fails to disclose all of the features recited in claims 18, 19 and 20. First, as described in the Amendment filed on September 10, 2001, the Examiner has attributed to the device shown in Figure 5 of Michel characteristics and capabilities that are not evident from the figure alone, without providing evidence from the written specification of Michel that such characteristics and capabilities are actually present.

Second, even if the Examiner's assumptions are true that such characteristics and capabilities are present in the device illustrated in the figures of Michel, the reference still fails to disclose all of the features recited in claims 18 to 20. For example, Michel fails to disclose a plurality of stop elements configured to limit a vibration travel of a mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in a central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements, as recited in claims 18, 19 and 20 as amended herein. As illustrated in Figure 1 of the present application, and as described at page 5, lines 7 to 10 of the Specification, the close proximity of the stop elements to the inner surface of the sleeve 10 or the mass body 51 which contacts the stop element, enable the vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements to be insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements. As described at page 3, lines 7 to 11 of the Specification, this minimization of the mechanical displacement of the mass body prevents a perceptible increase in the total imbalance of the device, thereby limiting the vibration and the noise emission. By contrast, the "stop elements" purported by the Examiner to be shown in Figure 5 of Michel shows that the vibration travel of the rubber spring elements would be very large compared to the stop elements, and thereby does not provide the structure of the device as recited in claims 18, 19 and 20 as amended herein or the benefits associated with the device as claimed.

As indicated in the Amendment filed on September 10, 2001, to reject a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), the Examiner must demonstrate that each and

every claim limitation is contained in a single prior art reference. See, Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation v. Genentech, Inc., 18 U.S.P.Q.2d 1001, 1010 (Fed. Cir. 1991). Still further, not only must each of the claim limitations be identically disclosed, an anticipatory reference must also enable a person having ordinary skill in the art to practice the claimed invention, namely the inventions of the rejected claim, as discussed above. See, Akzo, N.V. v. U.S.I.T.C., 1 U.S.P.Q.2d 1241, 1245 (Fed. Cir. 1986). In particular, it is respectfully submitted that, at least for the reasons discussed above, the reference relied upon would not enable a person having ordinary skill in the art to practice the inventions of the rejected claim, as discussed above. Also, to the extent that the Examiner is relying on the doctrine of inherency, the Examiner must provide a "basis in fact and/or technical reasoning to reasonably support the determination that the allegedly inherent characteristics necessarily flows from the teachings of the applied art." See M.P.E.P. § 2112; emphasis in original; and see, Ex parte Levy, 17 U.S.P.Q.2d 1461, 1464 (Bd. Pat. App. & Int'f. 1990). Thus, the M.P.E.P. and the case law make clear that simply because a certain result or characteristic may occur in the prior art does not establish the inherency of that result or characteristic. Accordingly, the anticipation rejection as to the rejected claim must necessarily fail for the foregoing reasons.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Michel does not anticipate amended claims 18, 19 and 20. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

III. Rejection of Claims 9, 10 and 15 to 17 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 9, 10 and 15 to 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,971,456 ("Hori"). It is respectfully submitted that Hori does not render obvious the present claims as amended herein for the following reasons.

With regard to claims 9, 10 and 17, the Final Office Action states that "Hori shows in figure 1 a vibration damper capable of being used for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising: a sleeve 14, 36 the sleeve defining a radial and circumferential direction, a mass body 12 mounted concentrically in the sleeve, a plurality of spring elements shown at element numbers 16, 24, 25, 27, 25 for mounting the mass body to the sleeve, a plurality of flexible stop elements top and bottom 34 and left and right 32 disposed

circumferentially between the spring elements and disposed between the mass body and the sleeve for limiting a vibration travel of the mass body at least in the radial direction, wherein the stop elements extend over a large circumferential angle than the spring elements and occupy a large portion of a space between the mass body, the spring elements and the sleeve as shown in figure 1, but does not specifically disclose that the spring elements are rubber." Final Office Action at p. 3. The Final Office Action contends at p. 4 that "Hori teaches in col. 1[,] lines 21-23 the use of the elastic members of a vibration damper being composed of rubber." The Final Office Action further contends at p. 4. that "[i]t would have been obvious to one of the ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the spring elements of the vibration damper of Hori shown in figure 1 to be composed of rubber or any suitable elastic material, as taught by Hori in figure 7, in order to provide good shock absorbing properties."

With regard to claim 15, the Final Office Action states at p. 4 that "Hori shows in figure 2 the sleeve 14,36 further defining an axial direction wherein the mass body 12 is mounted axially between at least two of the plurality of spring elements 27 and the unnumbered spring element on the opposite side of element 32 and the sleeve 14, 36 fits axially around the mass body 12 as shown in figure 2."

Regarding claim 16, the Final Office Action states at p. 4 that "Hori shows in figure 2 the sleeve including a tubular segment 36 having two sides (the side to which the line connected to element 30 points and the opposite side the abuts with element 32) and two end faced (unnumbered end faced - one face shown immediately to the right of element number 36 and the other face shown immediately to the left of element number 30), planar disc-shaped regions being included at both end faces, the plurality of spring elements being attached to the disc-shaped regions."

Claim 9 relates to a vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle. The vibration damper includes a sleeve defining a radial and circumferential direction. A mass body is mounted concentrically in the sleeve. A plurality of rubber spring elements mounts the mass body to the sleeve. A plurality of flexible stop elements is disposed circumferentially between each adjacent pair of spring elements and is disposed between the mass body and the sleeve to define a discrete space for limiting a vibration travel of the mass body at least in the radial direction. Each stop element extends over a larger circumferential

angle than the spring elements and occupies a large portion of a space between the mass body, the spring elements and the sleeve.

Claim 17 relates to a vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle. The vibration damper comprises a propeller shaft that defines a radial and a circumferential direction. A mass body is arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft. A plurality of rubber spring elements mount the mass body to the propeller shaft. A plurality of stop elements limit a vibration travel of the mass body at least in the radial direction. The stop elements are disposed between the mass body and the propeller shaft and circumferentially between each adjacent pair of rubber spring elements so as to define a discrete space. The stop elements include at least one of metal or rubber.

Hori purports to relate to a fluid-filled elastic center bearing mount. Hori states that an elastic body includes a pair of integrally formed elastic protrusions 32, which protrude a suitable distance radially outwardly into respective third and fourth pockets 26, 27. Col. 5, lines 18 to 21. Hori further states that the elastic body 16 includes a pair of integrally formed elastic stops 34, which protrude a suitable distance into the respective first and second pockets 24, 25. Col. 5, lines 31 to 33. Hori states at col. 7, lines 48 to 51 that the elastic stops 34 serve to protect the elastic body 16 from an excessive amount of elastic deformation when the mount 10 receives vibrations of a considerably large magnitude.

Applicants respectfully submit that Hori does not render obvious claims 9 and 17 for at least the reason that Hori fails to teach or even suggest all of the limitations recited in claims 9 and 17. For example, Hori fails to teach or even suggest a plurality of flexible stop elements disposed circumferentially between each adjacent pair of spring elements and between the mass body and the sleeve to define a discrete space. Figure 1 of the present application illustrates discrete spaces 45 defined between the flexible rubber stop elements 41, 42 and the sleeve 10 or the body mass 51. By contrast, the spaces, e.g., the pockets 24, 25, 26 and 27, of Hori are not discrete because they are open through respective windows 28 (col. 5, lines 13 to 15).

To establish prima facie obviousness, three criteria must be satisfied. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation to modify or combine reference teachings. In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988). This teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination must be found in the prior

art and not based on the application disclosure. In re Vaeck, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991). Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. In re Merck & Co., Inc., 800 F.2d 1091, 231 U.S.P.Q. 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986). Third, the prior art reference(s) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (C.C.P.A. 1974). Since Hori does not teach or even suggest all of the limitations of claims 9 and 17 as more fully set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that Hori does not render obvious claims 9 and 17.

Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the cases of In re Fine, supra, and In re Jones, 21 U.S.P.Q.2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992), make plain that the Final Office Action's generalized assertions that it would have been obvious to modify or combine the references do not properly support a § 103 rejection. It is respectfully submitted that those cases make plain that the Office Action reflects a subjective "obvious to try" standard, and therefore does not reflect the proper evidence to support an obviousness rejection based on the references relied upon. In particular, the Court in the case of In re Fine stated that:

> The PTO has the burden under section 103 to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. It can satisfy this burden only by showing some objective teaching in the prior art or that knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art would lead that individual to combine the relevant teachings of the references. This it has not done. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> **Instead, the Examiner relies on hindsight in reaching his obviousness determination. . . . One cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the prior art to deprecate the claimed invention.**

In re Fine, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d at 1598 to 1600 (citations omitted; italics in original; emphasis added). Likewise, the Court in the case of In re Jones stated that:

> Before the PTO may combine the disclosures of two or more prior art references in order to establish *prima facie* obviousness, there must be some suggestion for doing so, found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. . . .

> **Conspicuously missing from this record is any evidence, other than the PTO's speculation (if it be called evidence) that one of ordinary skill . . . would have b en motivated to make th modifications . . . necessary to arriv at the claimed [invention].**

In re Jones, 21 U.S.P.Q.2d at 1943, 1944 (citations omitted; italics in original).

That is exactly the case here since it is believed and respectfully submitted that the present Final Office Action offers no evidence whatsoever, but only conclusory hindsight, reconstruction and speculation, which these cases have indicated does not constitute evidence that will support a proper obviousness finding. Unsupported assertions are not evidence as to why a person having ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify or combine references to provide the claimed subject matter of the claims to address the problems met thereby. Accordingly, the Office must provide proper evidence of a motivation for modifying or combining the references to provide the claimed subject matter.

More recently, the Federal Circuit in the case of In re Kotzab has made plain that even if a claim concerns a "technologically simple concept" -- which is not the case here -- there still must be some finding as to the "specific understanding or principle within the knowledge of a skilled artisan" that would motivate a person having no knowledge of the claimed subject matter to "make the combination in the manner claimed," stating that:

> In this case, the Examiner and the Board fell into the hindsight trap. The idea of a single sensor controlling multiple valves, as opposed to multiple sensors controlling multiple valves, is a technologically simple concept. With this simple concept in mind, the Patent and Trademark Office found prior art statements that in the abstract appeared to suggest the claimed limitation. But, there was no finding as to the specific understanding or principle within the knowledge of a skilled artisan that would have motivated one with no knowledge of Kotzab's invention to make the combination in the manner claimed. In light of our holding of the absence of a motivation to combine the teachings in Evans, we conclude that the Board did not make out a proper prima facie case of obviousness in rejecting [the] claims . . . under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) over Evans.

In re Kotzab, 55 U.S.P.Q.2d 1313, 1318 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (emphasis added). Again, it is believed that there have been no such findings.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Hori does not render obvious claims 9 and 17. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 10, 15 and 16, which ultimately depend from claim 9, are also not rendered unpatentable by Hori for at least the same reason given above in support of the patentability of claim 9. In re Fine, supra (any dependent claim depending from a non-obvious independent claim is non-obvious).

IV. Rejection of Claims 11 to 13 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 11 to 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Michel in view of Hori. Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Michel and Hori does not render obvious the present claims for the following reasons.

The Final Office Action states that, with respect to claims 11 and 13, "[Michel] shows in figure 5 a sleeve 10, the sleeve defining a radial and circumferential direction, a mass body 20 mounted concentrically in the sleeve, a plurality of rubber spring elements 3 for mounting the mass body to the sleeve, wherein at least one of the mass body and the sleeve at least partially form, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements 111 for limiting a vibration travel of the mass body in a least the radial direction, but does not disclose the limitation wherein the stop elements 111 extend over a larger circumferential angle than the spring elements". However, the Final Office Action maintains that "Hori teaches in figure 1 the use of stop elements 32, 34 that extend over a larger circumferential angle than the spring elements 16, 24, 25, 27." The Examiner concludes that "[i]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the spring elements of the vibration damper of [Michel] to extend over a smaller circumference than the stop elements, as taught by Hori, in order to provide the damper with less resilience, a property than may be altered depending on the application in which the damper is utilized." In addition, with respect to claim 12, the Final Office Action states that "Hori teaches in figure 7 the use of a rubber 91 on stop element 82," and concludes that "[i]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the stop elements of [Michel], as

modified, to include rubber, as taught by Hori, in order to provide a shock absorbing means between the stop elements and any surfaces (the outer surface of the mass body 20) with which it may abut."

Claim 11 relates to a vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle. Claim 11 recites that the vibration damper includes a sleeve defining a radial and circumferential direction, a mass body mounted concentrically in the sleeve and a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the sleeve. At least one of the mass body and the sleeve at least partially form, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction. The stop elements define discrete spaces and extend over a larger circumferential angle than the spring elements.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Michel and Hori does not render obvious claims 11 to 13 for at least the reason that the combination of Michel and Hori fails to teach or suggest all of the features recited in claim 11. For example, neither Michel nor Hori discloses or suggests stop elements that define discrete spaces and extend over a larger circumferential angle than the spring elements. As described above, Figure 1 of the present application illustrates discrete spaces 45 defined between the flexible rubber stop elements 41, 42 and the sleeve 10 or the body mass 51. In contrast, the spaces, e.g., the pockets 24, 25, 26 and 27, of Hori are not discrete because they are open through respective windows 28 (col. 5, lines 13 to 15). In addition, and as described above, the "stop elements" purported in the Final Office Action to be present in Michel do not extend over a larger circumferential angle than the spring elements.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Michel and Hori does not render obvious claim 11. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Michel and Hori does not render obvious claims 12 and 13, which depend from claim 11, for at least the same reasons given above in support of the patentability of claim 11. In re Fine, supra.

V. Rejection of Claim 14 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hori in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,988,071 ("Shimazaki"). It is respectfully submitted that the combination of Hori and Shimazaki does not render obvious claim 14 for the following reasons.

Claim 14 depends from claim 9 and therefore includes all of the limitations of claim 9. Since claim 14 depends from independent claim 9, and since Shimazaki simply does not cure the critical deficiencies of Hori, it is respectfully submitted that claim 14 is allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 9 is allowable. In re Fine, supra.

VI. Conclusion

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current Amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with Markings to Show Changes Made**."

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

KENYON & KENYON

Dated: 3/25/02

By: _____

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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 9, 11 and 17 to 20 have been amended as follows:

9. (Twice Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a sleeve, the sleeve defining a radial and circumferential direction;

a mass body mounted concentrically in the sleeve;

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the sleeve; and

a plurality of flexible stop elements disposed circumferentially between each adjacent pair of spring elements and disposed between the mass body and the sleeve [for limiting] to define a discrete space to limit a vibration travel of the mass body at least in the radial direction, wherein each stop element extends over a larger circumferential angle than the spring elements and occupy a large portion of a space between the mass body, the spring elements and the sleeve.

11. (Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a sleeve, the sleeve defining a radial and circumferential direction;

a mass body mounted concentrically in the sleeve;

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the sleeve; and

wherein at least one the mass body and the sleeve at least partially form, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements [for limiting] configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, wherein the stop elements define discrete spaces and extend over a larger circumferential angle than the spring elements.

17. (Twice Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a propeller shaft, the propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction;

a mass body arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft;

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft; and

a plurality of stop elements [for limiting] configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body at least in the radial direction, the stop elements being disposed between the mass body and the propeller shaft and circumferentially between each adjacent pair of rubber spring elements so as to define a discrete space, the stop elements including at least one of metal or rubber.

18. (Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction;

a mass body arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft; and

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft;

wherein at least one of the mass body and the propeller shaft at least partially form, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements [for limiting] configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

19. (Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction;

a mass body arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft; and

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft;

wherein the mass body at least partially forms, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements [for limiting] configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.

20. (Amended) A vibration damper for a tubular propeller shaft in the drive train of a motor vehicle, the vibration damper comprising:

a propeller shaft defining a radial and a circumferential direction;

a mass body arranged concentrically in the propeller shaft; and

a plurality of rubber spring elements for mounting the mass body to the propeller shaft;

wherein the propeller shaft at least partially forms, in circumferentially opposite regions between the rubber spring elements, a plurality of stop elements [for limiting] configured to limit a vibration travel of the mass body in at least the radial direction, such that a vibration travel in a central compression direction of the plurality of rubber spring elements is insignificantly greater than in the central compression direction of the plurality of stop elements.